

MORVEN AND LINDA;

OR

THE TOKEN STAR.

A tale of a Soldier's faithful Love.

THIS POEM IS AN EXTRACT FROM A POPULAR BOOK
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By A. W. Mangum

"A beam that was set returns."—Ossian.

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MORVEN AND LINDA;

OR THE

TOKEN STAR.

'Twas eve, and nature slept in peace—
The sky, her covering, gemmed with stars—
While 'long the West bright, blushing hues
Still lingered like a fringe of gold:
She slept like one who sweetly knows
She's loved and loves the loving one,
And dreams while sleeping he is near,
And smiles and gives his love a tongue.

Beneath a broad and shadowy elm
A soldier and his fair betrothed
In quiet sat, and dreamed and loved.
They long had shared those sacred joys
Which kindred hearts each other give
When deep affection makes them *one*.
The noble youth with soul of fire,
Alive to duty's thrilling cry,
Had come to breathe a long adieu,
And give a pledge of changeless love.
The wid'ning visions of his soul,
In dreams—in fancy—all were stained
With tears of weeping innocence—
With smoke from robbed and burning homes—

With blood besprinkled hills and plains—
And on each fleeting wing of air
Was borne to him the loud appeal
Of struggling friends and countrymen
For help against his country's foe.
And she who by him sat, possessed
A heart too faithful to oppose
The zeal magnanimous, which led
To sacrifice and strife and pain,
For home and liberty and Heaven.

He spoke with trembling voice and low:
"To-morrow, Linda, I must haste
To scenes of strife, in distant fields;
To share with comrades, brave and true,
The dangers of a soldier's life;
And struggle with a dauntless soul
For truth and right and native land.
I hate this war and every war:
I have no cruel thirst for blood,
Nor wish, impelled by dark revenge,
To stand beside a fallen foe,
And hear him groan and see him writhe.
Such feelings suit a demon's breast.
I want no wreath bestained with blood—
No praise by dread destruction won.
I follow only duty's call,
And battle only for the cause
That all the good and Heaven approve.
'Twould be life's Eden, could I spend
My days at home with peace and thee.
Thou knowest this, and yet I'm sure
Thy heart would love me less, should love
Prevail to conquer virtue's power
And make me sheathe the sword of Right.
I'm here once more—but gone again;
E'en years may pass ere I return.
With me, remember, life itself
And memory of thee are one.
But ere I go I'd give to thee
A souvenir which shall recall,

With angel tongue, my name, in hours
 When precious memory's most dear,
 And hallowed thoughts most hallowed are.
 For this I will not leave a *flower*;
 Though flowers are pure and beautiful,
 And speak a language full of love;
 They, Linda, early droop and fade:
 They change with every beam and breeze;
 And cannot emblem well a heart,
 Which beats, like mine, *forever true*.

I will not leave the sparkling gem—
 The golden gewgaw or the pearl—
 For though they have a magic tongue,
 That speaks with potent charms to some,
 Yet *gold and diamond tongues are dumb*
 To hearts so excellent as thine.
 I will not leave on gilded page
 The painted vows which poets dream,
 Nor aught of all the wierd pen
 Has written to reveal the heart.
Books are not bosoms! They are born
 Too oft where only *thought* prevails;
 And simple types can never tell
 The faithful fervor of a soul
 Which glows and thrills with ceaseless love.
 And books! *Man made them*; saving *one*,
 And that I gave thee years ago.

I will not leave the spoken vow;
 For as I speak the echo dies
 Forever to the mortal ear.

I will not leave my miniature;
 It does not smile—I smile for thee;
 It does not pray—I pray for thee;
 It does not look with burning beam
 The living energy of soul:
 'Twould seem to be myself, and still
 'Twould be a mockery of me.

Behold yon richly radiant *Star*!
'Tis there all seasons of all years;
While others, often disappear
To shed their beams in other skies,
That always looks and is the same,
And never wearies of its home.
The clouds may overshadow it
The sun's unfriendly splendor hide;
Yê't when the veiling cloud is gone—
Or when the dazzling day is done—
It shines all loveliness again.
It is a tenant of the sky;
Its rays are pure—no earthly stain
Makes aught of its soft brilliancy.
It shines by night—to guide the dew
On visits to refresh the flowers.
It shines by night—like one who loves
Tranquillity and sacred peace.
It shines by night—as faithful hearts
Seek kindly for the scenes of gloom.
It shines by night—while nature sleeps,
Thus blessing earth—when earth knows not—
As angels bring their heavenly gifts,
And breathe sweet messages on souls
That never see the hands that give,
Nor know the precious lips that speak.
It shines by night—directing those
Who wander over pathless hills,
Or ride the waves with compass lost;
An emblem of the spirit light
Our Father sends, to guide the heart
Through moral wilderness and storm.
That *Star*, and that alone, I leave.
My love is pure as starlight's pure;
'Tis changeless as perennial beam;
'Twill be the same though parting clouds
Should lower long and dark between.
Behold it, then, and call it *thine*!
To me it shall a beacon be,
Commanding every deed of life;
Not that I'd serve thee more than Heaven,

But that I know thy will to be
That I should only Heaven serve.
As did the star of Bethlehem,
It shall proclaim with every ray
The language of eternal hope;
And tell us of that higher home,
Where forms like stars shall live to shine—
And souls like stars be high in Heaven.
'Twill lead us to look up to Him
Who made the stars to make us blessed.
'Twill tell us of the love, the power,
The wisdom and the grace of Him
Who deigns to be our Father God.
Then, dearest Linda, we can pray;
And constant hope, despite all fate,
That He will lead us once again
To happy union, *either here,*
Or in the purer light of Heaven!"
Here Linda wept—and weeping smiled;
Nor was it strange; for in a world
Where shade and sunshine often join,
The hearts are *few*, that feel not oft
Deep cause to mingle tears with smiles.
Then Linda, weeping, smiling said;
"Oh, Morven! ever be thyself!
I'll think of thee—I'll cherish thee,
I'll pray for thee—I'll love but thee;
Be sure to think of this and me!
Remember me each fleeting hour!
Aye, every moment think of me!
And be each thought of me, a call
To struggle for the right and Heaven!
I shall not change—I'm thine forever.
Good bye! We seek the same bright Home,
We'll meet again, I hope, on earth;
If not on earth—*still shall we meet.*"

Months fled apace. Each dusky eve,
Would Linda wander to the spot
Where she and Morven wept "*adieu.*"
When there she'd cast a tearful glance

To greet the gentle little Star—
 Then meekly bend the suppliant knee,
 And breathe to glory prayers like this :
 " Oh, Father ! show him yonder Star !
 When in his blanket wrapped he lays
 His wearied form upon the ground—
 Or walks the sentry's lonely beat—
 Or stands on outpost dark and drear--
 Then Father, show him yonder Star !
 And give its every beam a tongue
 To speak with power to his soul !
 Oh, may he ever faithful be,
 As that is faithful in its sphere !
 Bestow on him a cheerful heart
 'Mid all the trials he must bear !
 When sick in crowded hospital,
 Upon his little bed of straw,
 He thinks of distant home and friends,
 And sighs for tender hands and hearts
 To bless him in his suffering—
 But sighs in vain, All present One !
 Be thou his Friend and Comforter !
 When on the field 'mid serried ranks,
 He fronts the battle's storm, Oh God !
 Be round about him ! Be his shield !
 Oh, be his great deliverer !
 He loves me, Father ; make that love
 A sweet Evangel to proclaim
 His duty and his troth to Thee.
 Guide all his footsteps ! Make his life
 A holy Marathon for truth !
 Oh may he always trust in Thee,
 Receive and feel thy boundless love !
 I pray for peace ! oh Lord, how long ! "

Anon the beauteous Linda pined ;
 The lustre of her noble eye
 Grew dim—the roses on her cheek
 Were faded by despondency.
 The heart was sick—and when a heart
 Like hers, is filled with gloom or pain,

The power's felt through form and soul.
No more in gracefulness she tripped,
In evening shades, through woody bower.
'Twas seen her life was waning fast,
And friends were shedding secret tears.
One sunny day her mother sat,
And gazed on her with heart of grief,
As drooping on her couch she lay,
The mother thought her slumbering.
She *was* asleep to all around—
Her soul was living far away.
She thought with fervid hopes of him
Who "*loved and loves, if yet he lives.*"
She prayed for union, but not *here*—
Her spirit looked beyond the skies.
Believing death was almost come,
She oped her eyes and cast a glance
Of melting tenderness, and said :
"Dear mother ! come and kiss thy child !
I'd feel thy sweet embrace once more,
The last time hear thy tender voice.
I'm dying, mother, but I feel
No fear. All's well. Bid all my friends
Draw near and take this last adieu."
With streaming eyes and swelling hearts,
They gathered round the snow white couch,
Received the dying pledge of love—
Caught sacred warnings from her lips,
Then warmly pressed her little hand
And sighed a lingering "*farewell.*"
Again she spoke—they listened all ;
"Dear friends, I ask one last kind pledge ;
Soon I shall sleep in silent death ;—
Prepare my grave beneath yon elm,
And bury me at eventide,
When stars are shining in the sky ;
Place over me a marble block ;
Engrave no name—but cut a Star
Upon the surface—then a hand,
With finger pointing to the Star ;
And mark ! Should Morven e'er return,

Pray tell him that I begged you this.
I die—but oh ! beyond all dreams
Of joy that soul e'er dreamed below,
The real ecstasy of Heaven
Steals richly on my winging soul.
I die—but only *die to live*.
We part—but only *part to meet*,
Where those who meet shall part no more.”
This day, not far from Malvern Hill,
Within a bloody hospital,
Young Morven lay, with two deep wounds ;
From loss of blood and want of bread,
And dread fatigue, his face was pale—
His voice was tremulous and faint,
And yet to comrades lying near,
And writhing in their blood and pain,
He often spoke consoling words
And strove to calm their aching hearts.
With feeble hand he'd hold the cup,
To dying comrade's fevered lips,
And sigh for strength to help them more
He talked to them of holy trust
In Him who promises to heed
The humblest cry that's raised to Him,
For help and mercy, through his Son :
He spoke of blissful rest and peace,
Within the Beautiful of Lands,
Where war's alarms are never felt,
And cruel foes are never feared.
While speaking, sweet serenity
Was on his features, and a smile
Would often play upon them, like
The ripple from a gentle breeze
Upon the bosom of a lake
That rests in sunny peacefulness.
But soon night came, and o'er his weak
And wearied frame, soft slumber fell.
Then fancy rose and ruled the mind,
Creating freshly vanished hours,
And lading them with pleasures gone.
So faithful was she to the past,

He seemed to live it all again.
Fair Linda rose in visions bright,
And joined him in a thousand scenes
Of youthful hope and happiness.
Her voice was love's own melody—
Her every glance a pledge of love.
How beat his heart with gladness then!
'Twas feasting on the sacred joys
Of dearest *memory*, combined
With other joys he'd *hoped* for long,
And oft had viewed with ardent eye,
In scenes that coming days should bring.
But blissful as this dream, so dark
The cloud of gloom which soon should wrap
Its dismal folds around his heart.
He wakes and finds beside him one,
Who knew him in his distant home.
They'd long been friends with mutual trust—
Were kind and true as brothers are.
They loved to bless each other still.
He held a candle in one hand—
And gave a letter, which he said
Contained perchance some news from home;
Their homes were captured by the foe
The month they left, and not a line
Had they received from home and friends.
With eager hand he opened it,
But found no name. 'Twas written by
Some cruel one to torture him,
And blight his love and happiness.
By one who had a traitor turned
To all that's noble in the heart—
To friendship—native land and Heaven,
And who still sought the lovely hand
Of faithful Morven's sweet betrothed.
This letter told him startling things.
It taught him that he was forgot—
That Linda loved another now.
It gave him all her cruel words,
When she renounced her olden vow
And to another pledged her all.

This news was strange—'twas terrible—
And gained dominion over him.

He strove to doubt it—think it false,
But all in vain ; it would seem true.

He begged his friend to lend his arm
And lead him to a neighboring grove—

There sadly sinking to the ground,

He gave the letter to that friend

And begged, “ now leave me all alone.”

Oh, what a burden pressed his heart !

He leaned his head upon his hand

And mused awhile and deeply sighed ;

Then with a doleful, anguished voice,

He uttered this soliloquy :

“ Oh Linda ! Linda ! can it be !

What is there left to comfort me ?

The past I love, but that is gone.

The present is a soldier's lot—

Privation, suffering and pain ;

The future looks all pleasureless,

Save what of joy may gladden it,

By her fidelity and love.

And if she's false—the world is false—

For she was truest of the world.

If she be false—life's light is fled.

And oh ! to think, I'm so deceived,

By one I loved with such a love !

I should have deemed her pledged to me

Without the fervent pledges given.

She smiled sometimes when we would meet,

With gentleness enough to quell

The raging of a breaking heart.

She spoke sometimes with angel tongue,

Such words as linger sweetly yet,

Like music from the vales of Peace,

Ten thousand little favors done,

Proclaimed a loving woman's love.

These smiles, and words, and favors all,

Or each would make it *treachery*

And deep *deception*, were she false ;

But add to these the plighted vows,

So oft repeated—and at last
Embalmed in holy parting tears!
Oh, love! oh treachery! can it be?
How base the crime of dark deceit!
It was the primal fount of sin;
It withered all of Eden's bowers,
And stained her every crystal stream.
It is the darkest trophy-gem,
Whose lurid sparkling crowns the brow
Of him who reigns—the Prince of woe.
If I would be on earth a fiend,
Deception first should fill my soul;
And if a fiend I'd ever be,
I'd wed deceiving to my life.
It is the antithesis of truth—
Then is it black as truth is bright,
And truth is bright enough for Heaven,
And can a crime like this be born,
And fostered in the pious breast
Of Linda—whom we ever thought
The child of purity and truth?
*If false—her fall is one that's less
Alone than that which angels fell."*

O'er-whelmed with thoughts like these, he paused,
And soon his words were changed to tears.
Then sweetly on the silent air—
Soft melting strains of music came.
The notes were those of "Home, sweet Home;"
They shed enchantment o'er his soul.
Unwittingly he looked away
To where the Token Star still shone.
A beam of beauty kissed his soul,
And waked it from its reverie.
As swift as morning shadows fly,
When waves of sunlight flood the sky—
So swift his painful doubtings fled
And all his heart was trust again.
"No, Linda! I'll believe thee true,
Till thine own lips declare thee false.
No nameless letter can destroy

The trust of this unchanging heart.
Thy faithfulness is written high
Upon the bosom of the sky,
In changeless characters of light.
That record's worthier far of faith
Than all that erring man can write.
I will not—cannot doubt thee more."

Long, changeful months of strife passed o'er ;
But not one *fear* or *doubt* arose
To trouble Morven's hopes again.
At length he learned with grateful heart,
The foe were driven from his home ;
Just then, most fortunate, there came
A leave of absence from his corps,
That he might visit home once more.
How buoyant was his noble breast !
Alone he sped his hopeful way
To those who love and know they're loved,
How sweet anticipation is
When blessed reunion is at hand !

His journey done—at last he came
By starlight to the cherished elm.
When near, he gazed and saw the shaft—
His heart beat fast—he thought 'twas she.
Love could not wait ; it instant spoke :
"Oh Linda ! Linda, loved and dear !"
He listened—not a sound he heard.
Still gazing, to himself he said :
"It must be Linda, and she fears ;
Methinks I see her tremble now."
Again he cried with voice of love ;
"Sweet Linda ! I am home again !"
No word he caught—no motion saw.
He drew him near—descried the shaft ;
His hopes were faint—he quaked with dread ;
He stooped—he saw the marble Star—
He shrieked : "Oh Heaven ! 'Tis Linda's tomb !
And is she dead ? Oh, is she dead ?
Is this the home of hallowed joy,

Become the dreary scene of death ?
But there's some comfort even here.
This means that she was true till death.
Oh, that I could have present been,
To hear her dying words and prayers !
For they, I know, were treasures dear,
That even angels love to prize
She's gone—and with her all I loved,
And cherished most this side of Heaven.
She's gone—to fadeless glory *gone*,
She waits me on yon peaceful shore.
Up there, if we should meet again,
Eternal union would be ours ;
For this sweet thought I thank kind Heaven.
Thrice blessed they who meet on high !
Their lives and blessings never end.
Oh, what a boon it were to die,
And hie me to her better home !
But nay ; the Father's will be done !
I'll weep no more—instead of tears,
Her memory shall waken prayers.
Thou breaking heart ! go feel for those
Who need and bleed in wretchedness !
There's something left to live for still !
Go, guide these hands to scatter peace
In every hapless heart and home !
Then smiles from thy Redeemer still
Shall gently gather over thee,
And cheer thee on thy lonely way.
Thus beat away thy fleeting days,
And soon thy liberty shall come.
This block proves Linda was herself
As long as change was possible ;
She's *truer* now—she's glorified—
She lives where hearts can never change."

"Oh Morven ! Morven ! Is it thou ?
Thy Linda lives ! We've met again !"

The voice was hers—he knew it well.
He sprang, excited, to his feet.

He looked and lo! all beautiful,
Came Linda rushing to his arms!
He pressed her to his bounding heart,
And cried with fervid, trembling voice;
"Oh Linda! Is this all a dream?
Can such a glory real be?
What means it? Tell me—quickly tell!"
'Twas long before a word she spoke,
But sobbing, quivering, she lay
Enfolded in his loving arms.
When joy's first thrilling shock was passed,
She smiled with glowing love and said:
"Dear Morven! just ten months ago,
I almost slept the sleep of death.
When I believed my end was near,
I begged my friends to build a tomb
Of marble, and engrave it thus.
But Heaven graciously prolonged
My life, and gave me health again.
Anon we heard the bloody news
Of battles round our Capital.
You do not know the dread suspense,
The trembling, tearful anxiousness
That those at home experience,
When they have learned a battle's fought,
And cannot hear the fate of friends.
It clothes all countenances in gloom.
By day and night the heart is sad,
And though so eager, dreads to hear.
I never shall forget the day
A paper came, in which were given
The names of all our Southern slain.
How tremblingly I read that list!
I hurried almost madly on,
Till, oh! my eye beheld thy name!
I cannot tell thee what I felt—
I can't remember what I felt;
For 'twas a shock which rent my heart
As lightning rends the stricken tree.
Then with a love that could not die,
I straight resolved to raise this tomb
To thy most precious memory.